The SSPX That Nobody Knows

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Introduction

Billions and billions of years ago, the Earth was a molten Mass;
as it yet cooled from its tumultuous witness of birth,
God inscribed the rock with His eternal law;
from His mountain, He taught Moses His ordinances,
and His divine law He set in stone.

Yet, Death held man's gaze ever on the reflection of his mortal image.

He came down from heaven, and became man,
transforming the law into the bread of life,
melting the hardness of hearts,
establishing a new permanence in Simon Peter;
and upon this rock He built His Church,
providing the cornerstone, Himself, for the edification of His Church,
to be constructed in the hearts of men.

In 1976, Lefebvre famously accused the council; in 2020, the SSPX began an ambitious project, *The Crisis in the Church Series*,[1] wherein they endeavored to elaborate on 50 years of compounded quarrels; today, we find ourselves in a theological no-man's-land, debating supplied jurisdiction. Put bluntly, we will be chasing tangents for the next 500 years unless we get back on topic. Which topic? Well let's go back to the beginning; the council is our topic; more specifically, the documents promulgated by the council; more specifically still, the possibility of doctrinal contradiction in the documents promulgated by the council.

What a simple topic! Forget about supplied jurisdiction; who needs it if a few, straightforward answers can be given. Contradiction is not an issue deserving of a 50 year stalemated discussion. Contradiction is as blatant as a clown mass, and as simple as "yes" or "no." Fortunately, contradiction is our topic, and not because I choose it myself, but because the two interested parties jointly set the door of reconciliation upon the hinges of doctrinal consensus.

[1] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Crisis in the Church Series*, accessed February 15, 2024, https://sspxpodcast.com/crisis/6/.

From 1970 to 1988, Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre undertook a long correspondence with various figures of the Church hierarchy with the express intent of acquiring canonical regularity for his community of priests in Econe, Switzerland, who would come to be known as the Society of Saint Pius X.[2] This canonical regularity would have allowed the Society to licitly exercise various ecclesiastical functions such as administering the sacraments. During the correspondence, Lefebvre's understanding of certain teachings of the Second Vatican Council, and his views on the New Order of the Mass, became conditional elements in the determination of whether or not the SSPX would become a canonical institution. Lefebvre believed that the Second Vatican Council had contradicted a number of doctrines which had been infallibly taught before the council, and he argued that the liturgical reform manifested a faulty theology that was incompatible with the teaching of Trent. The apparent contradictions that Lefebvre perceived in the conciliar documents, combined with the possibility that a Pastoral council could err so egregiously in matters of faith and morals, persuaded him that he must reject the council insofar as it contradicted a superior authority, that of the infallible tradition of the Church. Lefebvre refused to accept what he believed to be heretical teachings, and it was from this position that Lefebvre refused the Church's offer also: canonical status on the condition that he and the society accept the council's teachings and the liturgical reform.

Since Lefebvre's death in 1991, the SSPX have maintained his position with remarkable consistency. In 2013, the Superior General of the SSPX announced that "on the doctrinal level we [the society] are still at the point where we started out in the 1970's,"[3] and "Archbishop Lefebvre's analysis remains [the] guiding principle."[4]

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2 La Crise Integriste, "Le Dialogue avec Jean-Paul II (1978-1987)," La Crise Integriste, 1999, https://lacriseintegriste.typepad.fr/weblog/le-dialogue-avec-jeanpaul-ii-19781987.html.

3 Bernard Fellay, "April 2013: Superior General's Letter," The Society of Saint Pius X, April 2013, https://fsspx.org/en/publications/letters/april-2013-superior-generals-letter-80-1856.

4 Ibid.

On the one hand, therefore, the SSPX will not accept Vatican II until it is reconciled with traditional Catholic teaching. Essentially, the Church has, for its part, required nothing less of the SSPX, for, in 2009, Pope Benedict proclaimed,

> Until the doctrinal questions are clarified, the Society has no canonical status in the Church, and its ministers – even though they have been freed of the ecclesiastical penalty – do not legitimately exercise any ministry in the Church.[5]

The Pope has spoken, and the SSPX cannot justify open disobedience to papal authority by criticizing a number of ambiguous passages or by detailing modernist influences which incontrovertibly undermine Catholicism from within, without, and all about; they can only justify open disobedience insofar as they refuse to accept teachings of the conciliar and post-conciliar magisterium which they believe contradict magisterial teaching of a greater authority: the infallible teachings of the Church. If there are no teachings in conciliar and post-conciliar magisterial texts that contradict a higher, magisterial authority, then there are no teachings that the SSPX, nor any Catholic, can, rather, ought to reject. If there are only ambiguous passages, and no direct contradictions, then a religious submission of intellect and will is *required* on the part of the faithful, making it their duty to seek out and adhere to truthful, Catholic interpretations of magisterial documents. ***Because the SSPX only identify three areas[6] where the Church has, perhaps, contradicted itself, the whole contention rests on these three theological areas, and rests on them only insofar as they contain contradictions, not insofar as an initial or uninformed reading of these areas might yield ambiguous notions.***

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5 Benedict XVI, *Remission of the Excommunication of the Four Bishops Consecrated by Archbishop Lefebvre,* March 10, 2009. Accessed Jun 5, 2024, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/letters/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20090310_remissione-scomunica.html.

6 The SSPX website lists five main concerns: Modernism, Ecumenism, Religious Liberty, Collegiality, and Liturgy. Only three make the list here because Modernism and Ecumenism don't qualify for this study; reading the works of Lefebvre and listening to the *Crisis in the Church Series* reveals that the SSPX consider Modernism to be the mother, as it were, of their other four concerns which are particular manifestations of modernist influence; the SSPX explicitly admit, in episode 27 of the *Crisis in the Church Series*, that there are no direct contradictions concerning Ecumenism in magisterial documents, only ambiguities.

The three substantive objections of the SSPX, which shall be shown to be untenable, have to do with the conciliar teachings of religious liberty and collegiality, and with the post-conciliar liturgical reform. I stipulate that SSPX ministers cannot justify celebrating and the faithful cannot justify participating in the liturgical celebrations of the SSPX,[7] because any notion that the Church's teaching on religious liberty, collegiality, or the liturgical reform contradicts traditional Catholic doctrine, is simply false. Further, because the said notions are false, there exists only one legitimate theological hindrance that prevents the SSPX and the Church from reconciliation *today*; both the SSPX and the Church agree upon the traditional doctrine of religious liberty and the liturgy, but the SSPX fail to understand crucial elements of the traditional teaching of collegiality, and this is the final theological hurdle. In each of the following chapters, I will develop this thesis by presenting the SSPX's objections on all three subjects and, afterwards, respond by employing authoritative, magisterial clarifications.

[7] Excepting confessions and weddings, over which Pope Francis granted SSPX ministers authority to reside.

Chapter One:
Why the SSPX Object to Religious Liberty

The SSPX object to the teaching of *Dignitatis Humanae*[8] (hereafter referred to as DH), the conciliar document that proclaimed man's right to religious liberty in civil society, for four reasons, which may be considered to contain the substance of the SSPX's objection, if they do not address every aspect of each manifestation of the objection. As Lefebvre enumerated in his book, *They Have Uncrowned Him*[9],

> The conciliar declaration on religious liberty turns out, to begin with, to be contrary to the constant magisterium of the Church. Moreover, it is not located along the line of the fundamental rights defined by the recent popes. Furthermore... it does not rest on any foundation, rational or revealed. Finally, it is… [not] in accord with the Catholic principles which regulate the relations of the temporal city with religion.[10]

In order to have a satisfactory understanding of the SSPX's objection to the conciliar document, it is necessary to understand why the society believes the document to be objectionable in these four ways. However, the aim of this study is not to engage with any and every objection that the society might have regarding the conciliar teaching, rather, only such objections which posit that the conciliar teaching is contrary to infallible Catholic doctrine. Now, the second reason, in the list of reasons provided by Lefebvre for objecting to the teaching of DH, is that "it is not located along the line of the fundamental rights defined by the recent popes,"[11] which is a conviction that the conciliar definition of religious liberty cannot be considered as part of a progression of Church teaching; this conviction does not concern contradiction so much as novelty, and Lefebvre only posited this conviction once he had concluded that the right to religious liberty, defined in DH, was "contrary to the constant magisterium

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8 Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Religious Liberty *Dignitatis Humanae*, accessed October 9, 2023, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html.

9 Lefebvre, Marcel, *They Have Uncrowned Him* (Kansas City: Angelus Press, 1988).

10 Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, 156.

11 Ibid.

of the Church."[12] Therefore, I will expound upon the first, third, and fourth reasons by which Lefebvre and the SSPX object to DH, but I will not explicitly address the second.

1. Contrary to the Constant Magisterium of the Church

"Religious liberty," argued Lefebvre, "turns out, to begin with, to be contrary to the constant magisterium of the Church."[13] DH proclaims that man has a natural right to religious liberty in civil society, meaning that "no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs."[14] This proclamation, Lefebvre observed, is contrary to the teaching of Popes Gregory XVI,[15] Pius IX[16], Leo XIII[17], Pius XI[18], and Pius XII[19]. It is contrary, Lefebvre argued, on the grounds that the pre-conciliar popes encouraged Catholic states to place legal restrictions on the false cults, in virtue of the duty of every Catholic ruler to safeguard the religious unity of its citizens.[20] That is, whereas DH taught that the civil authority can *only* forcibly interfere in religious matters that disrupt the "just public order,"[21] the pre-conciliar popes taught that the state ought to place restrictions on false religions on the sole basis of their falsity; Pius IX, in his encyclical *Quanta cura*,[22] condemned the opinion of those who,

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12 Lefebvre, Chapter XXVII, Parts One and Two, in *They Have Uncrowned Him*.
13 Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, 156.
14 Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, §2.
15 Gregory XVI, *Mirari Vos*, On Liberalism and Religious Indifferentism, accessed November 21, 2023, https://www.papalencyclicals.net/greg16/g16mirar.htm.
16 Pope Pius IX, *Quanta Cura*, Condemning Current Errors, accessed November 21, 2023, https://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius09/p9quanta.htm.
17 Leo XIII, Immortale Dei, On the Christian Constitution of States, §11, accessed October 9, 2023, https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_lxiii_enc_01111885immortale-dei.html.
18 Pius XI, *Quas Primas*, On the Feast of Christ the King, accessed November 21, 2023, https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_11121925_quas-primas.html.
19 Pius XII, Given to the National Convention of Italian Catholic Jurists *Ci Riesce*, accessed November 21, 2023, https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/ci-riesce-8948.
20 Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, 156.
21 Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, §2.
22 Pius IX, *Quanta Cura*, §3.

> against the doctrine of Scripture, of the Church, and of the Holy Fathers, they do not hesitate to assert that 'that is the best condition of civil society, in which no duty is recognized, as attached to the civil power, of restraining by enacted penalties, offenders against the Catholic religion, except so far as public peace may require.'"[23]

2. No Rational or Revealed Foundation

DH taught that religious liberty is a natural right belonging to every man, granting him immunity from coercion in civil society.[24] Further, DH taught that man is not "to be restrained from acting in accordance with his conscience, especially in matters religious."[25] But religious liberty, Lefebvre argued, "does not rest on any foundation, rational or revealed."[26]

> It is, rather, evident that of themselves, by the mere claim of their erroneous religion, the followers of this religion do not possess any natural right to immunity... If the longing ever took hold of you to impede the public prayer of a group of Moslems on a street, or even to disturb their worship in a mosque, you would possibly sin against charity and assuredly against prudence; but you would not cause *any injustice* [Lefebvre's emphasis] to these believers. They would not be wronged in any of the goods to which they have a right, or in any of their rights to these goods: in any of their goods, for their true good is not to carry on their false worship without obstacles, but to be able one day to exercise the true worship.[27]

A man with an erroneous conscience may be convinced that his erroneous worship is demanded by God, and yet, although the erroneous conscience binds,[28] man is also bound to know the Divine law, such that a man's willingness to worship in a false cult out of ignorance of the Divine law, does not excuse his will from evil,[29] nor does the act of worship become a good,[30] and the man cannot be said to possess a natural right to immunity from coercion: "that which does not correspond to truth or to the norm of morality objectively has no right to exist, to be spread, or to be activated."[31] Thus, the idea that

[23] Ibid.
[24] Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, §1 and §2.
[25] Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, §3.
[26] Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, 156.
[27] Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, 150.
[28] Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiae*, (Green Bay, WI: Aquinas Institute, Inc., 2018), I-II, qu. 19, art. 5.
[29] Aquinas, ST, I-II, qu. 19, art. 6.
[30] Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, 147.
[31] Pius XII, *Ci Riesce*, sec. 5.

every man has a natural right to immunity from coercion in civil society has no rational or revealed premises from which it can be deduced.

3. Discordant With the Catholic Principles of Church/State Relations

"Finally, [religious liberty] is… [not] in accord with the Catholic principles which regulate the relations of the temporal city with religion."[32] In Catholic states, Lefebvre noted, in consequence of an existing Catholic majority among the citizen body led by a Catholic ruler, the temporal common good, which is the state's proper sphere of authoritative rule,[33] is necessarily tied up with the salvation of its citizens' souls, and, to maintain its Catholic spirituality and the temporal benefits which flow from Church/state union, the state can and should justly assume legislative authority in religious matters. Now, Lefebvre had already observed the teaching of Leo XIII: namely, that the Church has as its chief end the salvation of souls, while civil society has as its chief end the temporal common good.[34] But, basing his reasoning on the model of soul-body union between Church and state recommended by Pope Leo XIII,[35] and the teaching of the social reign of our Lord,[36] Lefebvre concluded that, in Catholic civil society, "redemption of souls is extended of necessity by the submission of States and of their laws to the sweet and light yoke of the law of Christ."[37] Lefebvre did not only recognize the prerogative of the Catholic civil ruler to safeguard the Catholic order of the city, he also acknowledged that the "rules of… harmony between Church and state suppose an order, a hierarchy."[38] For this reason, Lefebvre argued that there are two manners in which the Catholic state can rightfully coerce in religious matters:

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32 Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, 156.
33 Leo XIII, *Immortale dei*, §14.
34 Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, 79.
35 Leo XIII, *Immortale dei*, §14.
36 Pius XI, *Quas Primas*.
37 Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, 80.
38 Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, 80.

on the one hand, it [a non-tolerance policy of non-Catholic religions] can be imposed onto the State in the name of its cura religionis, its duty to protect the Church and the faith of its members; on the other hand, the religious unanimity of the citizens in the true Faith is a precious and irreplaceable good, which it must protect at any cost, no matter what, for the temporal *common good* [Lefebvre's emphasis] itself of a Catholic nation."[39]

[39] Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, 159.

Answering the SSPX

The conciliar declaration on religious liberty, DH, is infamously difficult to reconcile with the teaching of the pre-conciliar popes.[40] However, relying heavily on the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's (hereafter referred to as CDF. It is the commission charged with defending the Church's doctrine on faith and morals and therefore has competency in such matters[41]) post-conciliar explanation of DH, [42] and the interpretation of DH provided by professor Thomas Pink,[43] each of the SSPX's reasons for objecting to religious liberty can be put to rest. For, by examining the pre-conciliar teaching on the Church and the state as two coercive powers, by explaining the relation between conscience and authority, and by comprehending the lack of distinction between Catholic and secular states in DH, any notion of magisterial contradiction is removed. These three points, which now follow in the form of responses to the SSPX, are enumerated according to the SSPX's objection with which they correspond.

1. Church and State as Distinct Coercive Powers

"Religious liberty," argued Lefebvre, "turns out, to begin with, to be contrary to the constant magisterium of the Church."[44] That is, DH taught that the civil power cannot coerce religiously,[45] while the pre-conciliar popes taught that the state ought to coerce in favor of Catholicism.[46] As professor Pink observed,[47] the apparent contradiction is only removed when we examine the pre-conciliar teaching on

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40 See Michael Davies' *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty*.

41 John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*, Chap. 3, art. 48, accessed October 1, 2023, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_19880628_pastor-bonus-roman-curia.html.

42 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Response to Dubia Presented by E.E. Mgr Lefebvre," accessed October 10, 2023, https://isidore.co/misc/Res%20pro%20Deo/Pope%20St.%20Pius%20X%20&%E2%81%84or%20SSPX/0_CDF_Religious%20Liberty_%20Response%20to%20dubia%20presented%20by%20E.E.%20Mgr%20Lefebvre-1646407926-904.pdf.

43 Pink,Thomas, "The Interpretation of *Dignitatis Humanae*: A Reply to Martin Rhonheimer,"accessed October 10, 2023, https://www.academia.edu/2911284/The_Interpretation_of_Dignitatis_Humanae_A_Reply_to_Martin_Rhonheimer.

44 Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, 156.

45 Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, §1 and §2.

46 Pius IX, *Quanta Cura*, §3.

47 Pink, "The Interpretation of *Dignitatis Humanae*: A Reply to Martin Rhonheimer."

two coercive powers,[48] Church and State, each a perfect society[49] charged by God with the care of different human ends:

> The Almighty, therefore, has given the charge of the human race to two powers, the ecclesiastical and the civil, the one being set over divine, and the other over human, things. Each in its kind is supreme, each has fixed limits within which it is contained, limits which are defined by the nature and special object of the province of each.[50]

Whatever, therefore, has any association with the salvation of souls is properly subject to the jurisdiction of the Church, while whatever pertains only to the temporal order is rightly subject to civil authority.[51] Although it is commonly believed that civil society alone has coercive authority, the Church teaches that both it and civil society have coercive authority,[52] that is, the authority to establish laws and enforce them with penalties.[53] Nevertheless, the authority proper to each society is bound by the "fixed limits" which the popes prescribed, and thus, the civil authority cannot "interfere in matters relating to religion, morality and spiritual government."[54] It is clear that it is on the basis of this distinction of powers that DH establishes the right of the individual to religious freedom:

> The religious acts whereby men, in private and in public and out of a sense of personal conviction, direct their lives to God *transcend by their very nature the order of terrestrial and temporal affairs* [my emphasis].… Government … would clearly transgress the limits set to its power, were it to presume to command or inhibit acts that are religious.[55]

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48 Leo XIII, *Immortale dei*, §11–14.

49 Pius XI, On Christian Education *Divini Illius Magistri*, §11–13, accessed November 21, 2023, https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_31121929_divini-illius-magistri.html.

50 Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei*, §13.

51 Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei*, §11.

52 Pius IX, *Syllabus of Errors*, No. 24, accessed October 9, 2023, https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/syllabus-of-errors-9048.

53 Catholic Church, *Code of Canon Law*, Latin-English Edition: Translation (Washington, D.C.: Canon Law Society of America, 1995), can. 1311, 27 October 1995.

54 Pius IX, *Syllabus of Errors*, no. 44.

55 Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, §3.

Thus, DH is in conformity with the pre-conciliar teaching on the limits of the civil power. But as Lefebvre observed, the pre-conciliar popes clearly taught that Catholic states have the duty, and therefore the right, to repress non-Catholic religions, that is, to interfere in the spiritual government of its citizens in the interest of their spiritual welfare and the state's temporal welfare.[56] Consequentially, either the pre-conciliar popes were somewhat schizophrenic, or else there is something special about the situation of a Catholic state; something which would be more properly answered in the last response, having to do with the Catholic principles of Church and state relations. For the present, it is clear that the teaching of DH is at least in conformity with the pre-conciliar teaching that the state, understood generally, has no authority in religious matters.

2. On the Relation Between Conscience and Authority

DH taught that religious liberty is a natural right belonging to every man, granting him immunity from coercion in civil society.[57] Further, it taught that man is not "to be restrained from acting in accordance with his conscience, especially in matters religious."[58] But according to Lefebvre's example of interference in Muslim worship,[59] no injustice would occur because the Muslims would not be deprived of any real good; they would only be inhibited from practicing evil, and evil has no rights.[60] Lefebvre established his argument by calling upon the theology of Aquinas, and contextually implied that the civil authority, like the individual whom he invoked, if it interfered in Muslim worship, would not commit an injustice.[61] However, Aquinas also taught that a law can be unjust if it pertains to a matter over which the author of the law does not have competent authority; in such a situation, man is not bound in conscience to obey that law, for "the like are acts of violence rather than law."[62] Thus,

56 Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, 156.
57 Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, §1 and §2.
58 Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, §3.
59 Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, 150.
60 Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, 147.
61 Ibid.
62 Aquinas, *ST*, I-II, qu. 96, art. 4.

according to Lefebvre's correct analysis, the Muslims and other erroneous religions do *not* have a natural right to practice their false cults, nor does DH indicate that they do.[63] What DH does teach is that man has a natural right to immunity from coercion in civil society in all matters religious, which is justified by Aquinas' teaching on unjust laws and competent authority when we consider that the civil authority has no competence in religious matters:

> it is the Church, and not the State, that is to be man's guide to heaven. It is to the Church that God has assigned the charge of seeing to, and legislating for, all that concerns religion; of teaching all nations; of spreading the Christian faith as widely as possible; in short, of administering freely and without hindrance, in accordance with her own judgment, all matters that fall within its competence…. Whatever, therefore in things human is of a sacred character, whatever belongs either of its own nature or by reason of the end to which it is referred, to the salvation of souls, or to the worship of God, is subject to the power and judgment of the Church. Whatever is to be ranged under the civil and political order is rightly subject to the civil authority.[64]

According to *Immortale Dei*, therefore, it would seem that the state is not a competent authority to pass religious legislation. Except, as it would undoubtedly be rebutted, *Immortale Dei* also called for a return to a political system where the state's legislation was permeated with the laws of the Gospel: the system of soul and body union between Church and state.[65] Thus, we have arrived at the same conclusion as the first response; that is, states, considered in themselves, enjoy no religious authority, but in relation to the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, states seem to gain certain privileges which will be discussed in the final response.

3. *Dignitatis Humanae's* Indistinction Between Catholic and Secular States

So far, I have established that secular states, or states irrespective of the Church, being established by God over the temporal order,[66] cannot breach the "fixed limits" of their authority by

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63 CDF, "Response to Dubia Presented by E.E. Mgr Lefebvre," p. 13.
64 Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei*, §11–14.
65 Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei*, §21.
66 Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei*, §13.

establishing laws in matters which, by their nature, transcend the realm of temporal affairs.[67] It remains, however, to be discussed whether, due to the "Catholic principles which regulate the relations of the temporal city with religion,"[68] Catholic states acquire special exemption from this teaching, as the pre-conciliar Popes seemed to have taught,[69] and whether DH established anything contrary to these Catholic principles.

As professor Pink pointed out, the Catholic state is a civil community of the baptized, collectively and publicly aspiring for eternal salvation.[70] The citizens of this community are subject to the civil authority, but, by virtue of their baptism, they are also subject to the Church's authority.[71] It is in virtue of a civil ruler's baptism, Pink observed, that the pre-conciliar Church had, on occasion, called upon the Catholic state to place restrictions on non-Catholic religions: "the holy Synod also exhorts all kings, princes,… and by virtue of holy obedience commands them, to vouchsafe to interpose, as often as requested, their help and authority in support of the aforesaid bishops,… and other superiors."[72] Pink also cited canon 2198 of the 1917 Code of Canon Law:

> A delict that violates only a law of the Church can, by its nature, be pursued only by ecclesiastical authority, which authority can call upon the arms of civil authority when it judges it opportune and necessary; a delict that violates only laws of civil authority by proper law, according to the prescription of Canon 120, is punishable by civil authority, although the Church retains competence by reason of sin; a delict that violates the laws of both societies can be punished by both powers.[73]

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67 Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, §3.
68 Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, 156.
69 Pius IX, *Quanta Cura*, §3.
70 Pink, "The Interpretation of *Dignitatis Humanae*: A Reply to Martin Rhonheimer."
71 Aquinas, *ST*, II-II, qu. 10, art. 9.
72 Council of Trent, Session 25, *On Regulars and Nuns*, chapter XXII, accessed November 21, 2023, https://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/trent/twenty-fifth-session.htm.
73 The 1917 or Pio-Benedictine Code of Canon Law: In English Translation with Extensive Scholarly Apparatus," foreword by Most Rev. John J. Myers, S. T. L., J. D., J. C. D., edited by Dr. Edward N. Peters, curator, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2001. Latin edition: *Codex Iuris Canonici, Pii X Pontificis Maximi, iussu digestus; Benedicti Papae XV, auctoritate promulgatus. Praefatione, fontium annotatione et indice analytico-alphabetico ab emo Petro Card. Gasparri, auctus*, published by P.J. Kennedy & Sons, New York, 1918, can. 2198, accessed November 21, 2023, https://cdn.restorethe54.com/media/pdf/1917-code-of-canon-law-english.pdf.

Therefore, Lefebvre is correct to assert that the non-tolerance of dissident cults "can be imposed onto the State in the name of its *cura religionis*, its duty to protect the Church and the faith of its members,"[74] because the aspiring Catholic state is subject to the Church's jurisdiction. Lefebvre's other claim, that the Catholic state can enforce a non-tolerance policy on false religions purely in the interest of the "temporal common good,"[75] seems reasonable, but only insofar as the false religions transgress or endanger the temporal order; the state cannot coerce purely on the grounds of religious falsity. But, returning to Lefebvre's first point, DH did not stipulate the Catholic principles of Church/state relationships, and did in no way contradict them by neglecting to do so, as I will now demonstrate.

As professor Pink observed, the conciliar declaration on religious liberty, DH, "bypassed,"[76] or rather, purposefully omitted any and all mention of the duties of Catholics and Catholic states toward the true religion, as the declaration itself claimed.[77] The CDF, backed by the reasoning of those who drafted the conciliar declaration, also asserted that DH has nothing to do with the intra-ecclesial life of the Church, nor does it enumerate all of the duties of the faithful to the Church:

> it must be taken into account that immunity from external coercion in religious matters, as understood by DH, refers to the social and civil domain. For this reason, … the Conciliar Commission clarified that, in DH, are not treated the problems of the intra-ecclesial life (relation of the faithful among themselves or with ecclesiastical authority).[78]

But how can we be further assured that the conciliar declaration can truly say that "it leaves untouched traditional Catholic doctrine,"[79] when we consider not only the absence of intra-ecclesial discussion in the conciliar text, but also the declaration's exhortation for every state to adopt a

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74 Lefebvre, *They Have Uncrowned Him*, 159.
75 Ibid.
76 Pink, "The Interpretation of *Dignitatis Humanae*: A Reply to Martin Rhonheimer," p. 26.
77 Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, §1.
78 CDF, "Response to Dubia Presented by E.E. Mgr Lefebvre," p. 21.
79 Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, §1.

constitutional guarantee of religious liberty?[80] To begin with, we can reiterate the conclusions of the first two responses; man has a natural right to religious liberty in civil society because religious acts, of their nature, transcend the realm of temporal affairs with which civil authority is concerned. But what of DH's exhortation for all states and especially Catholics to recognize the need for religious liberty as a civil law? Doesn't a constitutional guarantee of religious liberty prohibit the Catholic state's ability to employ its coercive authority in the service of the Church, which canon 2198 of the 1917 code of canon law enabled?[81]

All of the evidence leads to the conclusion that DH's exhortation was a prudential measure which guaranteed the freedom of the Church in many countries, including secular ones, in an era when the Church no longer had a soul-body union with civil society. The exercise of the Church's coercive force is often a matter of prudential decision, to be used when the Church "judges it opportune and necessary,"[82] as even Lefebvre acknowledged.[83] Therefore, a sebbatical from its employment does not imply a renunciation of it in principle, leaving open the option for the Church to return to its use. For it is extremely clear, in the CDF's explanation of DH, in the section titled *Duties of the State towards religion. Church and State*, that the assistance which the state owes to the Church is not fully stipulated in DH, and it may vary according to the political and prudential circumstances:

> DH 3 does not define the concrete mode of assistance that the Catholic Church can request from a Catholic state. The concrete methods of collaboration between Church and State will vary according to the circumstances, but two principles must always be respected: no man can be forced by the state to embrace a specific religious belief; it is not within the competence of the State as such to discern truth in religious matters (apart from what relates to natural morality, to what may limit, as we have just said, manifestations supporting or undermining good public order). This principle is based on the distinction between the ends and the means proper to Church and State, in accordance, for example, with the doctrine taught by Leo XIII.[84]

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80 Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, §15.
81 The 1917 or Pro-Benedictine Code of Canon Law, can. 2198.
82 Ibid.
83 Lefebvre, They Have Uncrowned Him, 182.
84 CDF, "Response to Dubia Presented by E.E. Mgr. Lefebvre," p. 15.

Note that the "two principles [that] must always be respected" do not private the civil authority of any rightful power or any duty to the Church, whether it be a Catholic or secular authority. Firstly, because neither the civil nor the ecclesiastical authority can force a man to embrace a specific religious belief,[85] and secondly, because, even where the Church has occasionally asked the state for assistance, it has never allowed it to authoritatively teach in religious matters, or "discern" religious truth.[86]

Summary and Conclusion

Thus, the pre-conciliar teaching that the state, acting on behalf of the Church, can place restrictions on non-Catholic religions, is not undermined by DH, and the Church retains the right to ask the state to do so again at some point in the future. Therefore, accumulating the findings of the three responses, and in opposition to the assertions of the SSPX, I conclude that religious liberty is not contrary to the constant magisterium of the Church, that it has a sure foundation in the nature and dignity of man, and that it is in accord with the Catholic principles which regulate Church/state relations.

[85] Aquinas, *ST*, II-II, qu. 10, art. 8–9.

[86] Constantine at the Council of Nicaea did not take part in the theological discussions nor did he have a vote on the decrees.

Chapter Two:
Why the SSPX Object to Collegiality

The sad truth of the matter is that we will not be graced with such thorough theological analysis from the pen of Lefebvre, in chapters two and three of this study, as we were in chapter one. The reason being that a more extensive theological defense of the SSPX's position on the matters of Collegiality and the liturgical reform, has been developed by SSPX priests, who, holding fast to Lefebvre's essential understanding of the issues, have expounded upon them. There are two reasons for which the SSPX object to the conciliar document *Lumen Gentium* (LG),[87] a document promulgated by the Second Vatican Council that, among other teachings, contained some of the conciliar teaching on the role that bishops have in the Church. The first reason, supported both by Lefebvre and SSPX priest Don Tranquillo, is that LG contradicted Vatican I, which, in their understanding, definitively taught that the power of supreme jurisdiction was given by God to Peter alone, and that if the rest of the episcopate ever wielded that supreme power in any way, it was because the Pope delegated it. The second reason for objecting to LG, presented by Don Tranquillo, is that LG, contrary to the very clear statements of Pope Pius XII,[88] taught that bishops are endowed with the jurisdictional office, *munera*, via their episcopal consecration.

1. *Lumen Gentium's* Teaching of a Double Subject of Supreme Power Contradicts Vatican I

Lumen Gentium taught that the Pope is one subject of supreme power in the Church, and that the College of Bishops, understood to include the Pope, is another subject of the supreme power, by virtue of the power of binding and loosing that Jesus gave to all the apostles.[89] Believing that Vatican I,

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87 Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, accessed October 9, 2023, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

88 Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, On the Mystical Body of Christ, accessed October 21, 2023, https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_29061943_mystici-corporis-christi.html.

89 Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, § 22.

in its *First Dogmatic Constitution of the Church of Christ*,[90] had taught that the Pope alone is endowed by God with the supreme power of jurisdiction in the Church, Lefebvre rejected the conciliar teaching.[91] As Vatican I taught:

> according to the gospel evidence, a primacy of jurisdiction over the whole church of God was immediately and directly promised to the blessed apostle Peter and conferred on him by Christ the lord…. It was to Simon alone, … that the Lord… spoke these words: 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'… And it was to Peter alone that Jesus, after his resurrection, confided the jurisdiction of supreme pastor and ruler of his whole fold, saying: 'Feed my lambs, feed my sheep.'[92]

Further, Leo XIII in his encyclical *Satis Cognitum*, taught that the passage about our Lord giving Peter the keys clearly signifies the bestowal of full and supreme power, "nor is it lawful to interpret in a different sense what was given to Peter alone, and what was given to the other Apostles conjointly with him."[93] Therefore, whatever is signified by the power of binding and loosing which was given to all of the apostles, it would seem that it was not the supreme power of jurisdiction as LG taught.

Thus, the SSPX believe that the Pope alone receives the supreme power of jurisdiction immediately from God. For, if bishops ever do enjoy the supreme power of jurisdiction, argued Don Tranquillo in an SSPX video series called *The Crisis in the Church Series*,[94] it is because it is delegated to them by the Pope:

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90 First Vatican Council, *First Dogmatic Constitution of the Church of Christ*, session 4, chap. 3, accessed October 21, 2023, https://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum20.htm.

91 Lefebvre. *Open Letter to Confused Catholics* (Angelus Press, 2012), p. 111.

92 Vatican I, *First Dogmatic Constitution of the Church of Christ*, session 4, chap. 1.

93 Leo XIII, On the Unity of the Church *Satis Cognitum*, §15, accessed October 21, 2023, https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_29061896_satis-cognitum.html.

94 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Crisis in the Church Series*, accessed November 21, 2023, https://sspxpodcast.com/crisis/6/.

> Like in the councils; the Pope takes all the Bishops together, and does some acts of government or teaching with them, but it's his authority communicated to the body of bishops. This is Catholic, we can accept that. But that's not *Lumen Gentium*, not at all. Lumen Gentium says from our Lord to the body of bishops: with the Pope, under the Pope, but *from our Lord*…. that is the heart of the error.[95]

2. A Bishop's Ordinary Jurisdiction is Given by the Pope, not by Episcopal Consecration

LG taught that episcopal consecration confers the office of sanctification as as well as the office of teaching and governing (jurisdiction),[96] but Pope Paul VI observed, in the preliminary note that he attached to the conciliar document, that the governing office conferred by episcopal consecration on the bishop, is not an office fully ready to act, "there must be a further canonical or juridical determination through the hierarchical authority."[97] Thus, according to LG, a bishop acquires the jurisdictional office at consecration but must be given a canonical mission in order to licitly exercise the power of his ordinary jurisdiction. It is in this qualified sense, that Pope Paul VI taught that ordinary jurisdiction can be said to be given by the Pope, and such is how the recent Pontiffs must be interpreted: "the documents of recent Pontiffs regarding the jurisdiction of bishops must be interpreted in terms of this necessary determination of powers."[98]

According to Don Tranquillo, however, the multiple encyclicals[99] where Pope Pius XII teaches that a bishop's ordinary jurisdiction is given him by the Pope leave no room for Pope Paul VI's qualification: "we have read them; it is impossible to understand them in this way."[100] The idea that ordinary jurisdiction, all-inclusively, comes to the bishops from the Pope alone "is not our opinion as traditional Catholics, it is what the Church teaches, has taught for centuries."[101] Thus, the SSPX believe

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95 SSPX, *The Crisis in the Church Series*, ep. 29.
96 Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, § 21.
97 Second Vatican Council, *Nota Praevia* to *Lumen Gentium*, §2, accessed October 21, 2023, https://www.fisheaters.com/notapraevia.html.
98 Vatican II, *Nota Praevia* to *Lumen Gentium*, §2.
99 Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis* and *Ad Sinarum Gentem*.
100 SSPX, *The Crisis in the Church Series*, ep. 29.
101 Ibid.

that this teaching cannot be qualified by a pastoral council that merely employs the authority of the Church's Ordinary Magisterium.

Answering the SSPX

1. The Fathers at Vatican I Believed a Double Subject of the Supreme Power to Exist

The First Vatican Council did in fact define that Peter was given supreme power over the universal Church by virtue of words spoken to him alone: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."[102] But this does not necessitate that the Lord did not grant supreme power to the apostles via other words; for instance, after having given Peter the keys, Jesus said to all of the apostles, "whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."[103] It is important to note that Vatican I, in the *First Dogmatic Constitution of the Church of Christ*, did not say "to Peter alone was supreme power given," the document says "to Simon alone… the Lord… spoke these words."[104] To make note of this is important because most of the council fathers at Vatican I believed that the apostles *were* given supreme power by Christ. Bishop Zinelli of Treviso, relator of the deputation De Fide, the deputation tasked with writing the dogmatic definitions of the council,[105] explicitly clarified the meaning of the definition on Papal Primacy:

> However, perhaps the Most Reverend Fathers will say: Is not the supreme and truly full power also present in an ecumenical council? Did not Christ promise to be present with all the apostles? Did He not say to the apostles, "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven"? Did He not say other things that clearly indicate that He wanted to grant supreme and full power to His Church?
>
> … we willingly admit that supreme and full ecclesiastical power is in all the faithful in an ecumenical council or in the bishops together with their head. This aligns perfectly with the Church with its head.[106]

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[102] Vatican I, *First Dogmatic Constitution of the Church of Christ*, session 4, chap. 1.
[103] The Holy Bible, *Gospel of Matthew*, 18:18, New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition. Bible Press, 1993.
[104] Vatican I, *First Dogmatic Constitution of the Church of Christ*, session 4, chap. 1.
[105] Dom Cuthbert Butler, *The Vatican Council 1869-1870*, ed. Christopher Butler (Westminster, 1962), p. 343.
[106] Mansi. *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, (H. Welter, 1927), Volume 52, 1108-1110.

Thus, the conciliar definition of Papal Primacy in the *First Dogmatic Constitution of the Church of Christ*, in no way excludes the possibility that Christ gave all of the Apostles supreme authority. Nor, importantly, did the Vatican I definition specify where this supreme power comes from when bishops, as successors of the Apostles, wield it in an ecumenical council, as I will now demonstrate.

Lefebvre and Don Tranquillo would have us believe that Vatican I taught that "the Pope alone has supreme power; he communicates it only to the degree he considers advisable… The pope alone has power of jurisdiction over the whole world."[107] But this was not the intention, nor the unintended accomplishment of the council Fathers when, in the finalized definition of Papal power, they proclaimed that the Pope has "full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the whole church."[108] For, as bishop Zinelli continued his relatio, he specified this very point:

> However, let it not be thought that we are defining the question that was so debated in the Council of Trent about the derivation of jurisdiction in bishops, with some deriving it immediately from the Supreme Pontiff and others immediately from Christ Himself.[109]

How is it, then, that Leo XIII, to whom the SSPX appealed, not long after the First Vatican Council, seems to have taught in *Satis Cognitum* that the words which Jesus spoke to the Apostles do not imply the bestowal of supreme power, especially in light of the fact that most of the council fathers believed the opposite? An examination of the immediate text surrounding Pope Leo's claim reveals the answer:

> It is not sufficient for the due preservation of the unity of the faith that the head should merely have been charged with the office of superintendent, or should have been invested solely with a power of direction. But it is absolutely necessary that he should have received real and sovereign authority which the whole community is bound to obey. What had the Son of God in view when he promised the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven to Peter alone? Biblical usage and the unanimous teaching of the Fathers clearly show that supreme authority is designated in the passage by the word keys. Nor is it

[107] Lefebvre. *Open Letter to Confused Catholics* (Kansas City: Angelus Press, 2012), 111.
[108] Vatican I, *First Dogmatic Constitution of the Church of Christ*, session 4, chap. 3.
[109] Mansi. *Sacrorum conciliorum*, Volume 52, 1108-1110.

> lawful to interpret in a different sense what was given to Peter alone, and what was given to the other Apostles conjointly with him.[110]

It is evident, taking the passage as a whole, that Pope Leo did not mean that Peter was the only Apostle with supreme power, rather, Pope Leo was defending the definition of Vatican I, that Peter was given the fullness of that power apart from the other Apostles,[111] against those who argued that the pope is but a "superintendent" with the "power of direction." Pope Leo neither condones nor rejects the notion of the pope and bishops as a second subject of the supreme power. His teaching maneuvers carefully, affirming the pope has supreme power without the other bishops, and denying that bishops have authority over the pope:

> Indeed, Holy Writ attests that the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven were given to Peter alone, and that the power of binding and loosening was granted to the Apostles and to Peter; but there is nothing to show that the Apostles received supreme power without Peter, and against Peter.[112]

Now it is specifically on the bible passage in which Jesus gives to all of the Apostles the power of binding and loosing that LG bases its teaching that bishops wield supreme power in the Church,[113] which interpretation has been shown to be in continuity with the thought and magisterium of the Church. In fact, before the Franco-Prussian war forced the suspension of the First Vatican Council, the Fathers began work on a *Second Dogmatic Constitution of the Church of Christ*, and argued in its drafting for a double subject of supreme power, the Pope, and the body of bishops with the Pope, and based their argument on the same bible passage.[114] Moreover, Lefebvre's argument that Vatican I taught that bishops only wield this supreme power when it is delegated to them by the Pope, was falsified by the lucid testimony of Bishop Zinelli who explicitly stated that it was not being defined that bishops

[110] Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum*, §15.
[111] Vatican I, *First Dogmatic Constitution of the Church of Christ*, session 4, chap. 3.
[112] Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum*, §15.
[113] Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, § 21.
[114] Mansi. *Sacrorum conciliorum*, Volume 53, p. 321.

receive their jurisdiction from the Pope. Thus, Vatican I and *Satis Cognitum* are in no way opposed to the teaching of LG, which proclaimed that "the order of bishops, … is also the subject of supreme and full power over the universal Church, provided we understand this body together with its head the Roman Pontiff and never without this head."[115]

2. Pius XII's Teaching on the Source of Bishops' Jurisdiction was Qualifiable

While Don Tranquillo claimed that the teaching that the Pope gives the bishops their ordinary jurisdiction, is a teaching which has been taught by the Church for centuries,[116] it must be noted that this teaching did not make its way into the Church's magisterium until Pius XII's *Mystici Corporis*, and then, only in a non-definitional manner.[117] Until that time, the teaching enjoyed the status of a "celebrated theological system"[118] and a "controverted question."[119] Even after Pius XII had taught it in both *Mystici Corporis* and *Ad Sinarum Gentem*,[120] theologians such as Salaverri and Ratzinger still considered the teaching to be "the preferred opinion"[121] and "the common teaching."[122] That is, all that anyone considered to be set in stone was the manner in which Pius XII applied the teaching in his encyclicals: in some manner, ordinary jurisdiction must be considered to flow to the bishops through the Roman Pontiff, such that without being in communion with him, bishops do not have jurisdictional power:

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115 Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, § 22.
116 SSPX, *The Crisis in the Church Series*, ep. 29.
117 CDF, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Concluding Formula of the Professio fidei*, accessed November 21, 2023, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_1998_professio-fidei_en.html.
118 Dom Cuthbert Butler, *The Vatican Council 1869-1870*, p. 343.
119 The Catholic Encyclopedia, ed. by Charles G. Herbermann. (Encyclopedia Press, 1913), Volume 2. p. 584.
120 Pius XII, *Ad Sinarum Gentem*, accessed October 25, 2023, https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_07101954_ad-sinarum-gentem.html.
121 Joachim Salaverri, S.J., *Sacrae Theologiae Summae*, trans. Kenneth Baker, S.J. (Madrid, 1956), No. 374.
122 Karl Rahner, and Joseph Ratzinger, *The Episcopate and the Primacy*, (West Germany, 1962), p. 17.

> Yet in exercising this office they are not altogether independent, but are subordinate to the lawful authority of the Roman Pontiff, although enjoying the ordinary power of jurisdiction which they receive directly from the same Supreme Pontiff.[123]

Therefore, is it impossible to reconcile Pius XII's teaching with Paul VI's qualification, as Don Tranquillo insisted? No, the qualification is applied quite easily. Paul VI distinguished between the "ontologico-sacramental function" of jurisdiction which a bishop receives through episcopal consecration, and the "juridical determination through the hierarchical authority," by which the bishop can be considered to be in "hierarchical communion,"[124] and by which he is fully ready to govern. Without hierarchical communion, the bishop cannot employ his ontological function. Now, according to Pius XII, bishops who have only received their episcopal consecration do not have jurisdictional power:

> the power of orders… comes from receiving the Sacrament of Holy Orders. But the power of jurisdiction, which is conferred upon the Supreme Pontiff directly by divine rights, flows to the Bishops by the same right, but only through the Successor of St. Peter, to whom… all the Bishops must be constantly subject.[125]

To which, if we apply Paul VI's qualification, substituting the phrase "power of jurisdiction" with the phrase "juridical determination,"[126] we end up with the same result: "without hierarchical communion the ontologico-sacramental function… cannot be exercised."[127] Thus, the teaching of Pius XII, considered *by none* to be an unalterable magisterial teaching,[128] and which admits of no logical inhibition preventing the application of Paul VI's qualification, does not contradict LG or its preliminary note.

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123 Pius, *Mystici Corporis*, §42.
124 Vatican II, *Nota Praevia* to *Lumen Gentium*, §2.
125 Pius XII, *Ad Sinarum Gentem*, §12.
126 Vatican II, *Nota Praevia* to *Lumen Gentium*, §2.
127 Vatican II, *Nota Praevia* to *Lumen Gentium*, §4.
128 Joachim Salaverri, S.J., *Sacrae Theologiae Summae*, No. 374.

Chapter Three:
Why the SSPX Object to the Liturgical Reform

The liturgical reform was a thorough revision of the Roman missal and many other aspects of the Roman liturgy. It was set in motion before the Second Vatican Council,[129] and completed by the Concilium.[130] A little before the new Roman missal was promulgated, two Cardinals, Ottaviani and Bacci, submitted a "Brief Critical Study of the New Order of the Mass,"[131] drafted with the help of Lefebvre.[132] The study was the cardinals' critique of "innovations in the Novus Ordo and the fact that all that is of perennial value finds only a minor place, if it subsists at all."[133] The cardinals expressed their concern that the reform would lead to a "lessening of faith" through a failure to represent the Church's teaching. Thirty years later, in *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, the SSPX approached the reform and Ottaviani's study from another angle. According to the SSPX, the liturgical reform was constructed by theologians who, when assembling the liturgical rites, employed theological principles contradictory to Catholicism, thereby inventing a non-Catholic rite.[134] The SSPX did not claim that the Mass explicitly denies any dogma, in fact, they affirmed the opposite.[135] What they did argue, was that the theologians "oriented the gestures and the words,… in order to make the rite conform to the theology of the Paschal mystery and to give expression to it."[136] Finding that the Theology of the Paschal Mystery contradicts three traditional truths, the SSPX leveled three explicit accusations against the Church's Mass. These accusations are quite remarkable in what they consist. Each accusation has a double edge; each has a negative and a positive critique; each an argument for why the Mass fails to

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129 Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosantum Concilium*, §21, accessed November 21, 2023, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html.

130 The Concilium was the committee charged with the reformation of the liturgy.

131 Ottaviani, Alfredo, "Short Critical Study of the New Order of Mass," (Philothea Press, 2010).

132 Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais, *The Biography: Marcel Lefebvre* (Kansas City: Angelus Press, 2004).

133 Ottaviani, "Short Critical Study of the New Order of Mass," Letter from Ottaviani and Bacci.

134 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform* (Kansas City: Angelus Press, 2001), General Conclusion.

135 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 100.

136 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 100–101.

sufficiently express a certain dogma or a theological truth, and how this privation becomes the expression of "a doctrine that smacks of heterodoxy."[137] These accusations are what follow, after which I will briefly summarize them and the conclusions which the SSPX drew.

1. The Paschal Mystery: A New Theology of Sin and Redemption

The SSPX stressed that prayers had been removed from the Mass which safeguarded and effected a contrition of heart in the ritual's participants,[138] a righteous contrition that stems from the participant's unworthiness to celebrate the sacred mysteries. The notion that sin incurs a debt thereby lost the emphasis that it once had in the ritual, and the only conclusion, because of the thoroughness with which the prayers had been removed, was that they had been removed on purpose: "everything even remotely associated with the punishment due to sin… has been diminished or even suppressed by the liturgical reform."[139] The scale of the reform is not exaggerated by the SSPX, for the list of particular changes in the Mass which the society provides to support its argument is too long to sufficiently dwell on or properly treat in this study.

The pressing question is whether the intent of these reforms was driven, as the SSPX claimed, by a desire to entirely eradicate from the Mass the doctrine of the need for the satisfaction of divine justice, and whether the reformers accomplished their intent. Such was the SSPX diagnosis; the malefactors, unsurprisingly, included members of the committee in charge of the reform, the Consilium, but the novel discovery made by the SSPX was of the faulty theology that the Consilium probably employed in these changes. I do not claim to do justice to the theological nuances of each of the theologians which the SSPX condemns in their book; I will accept the quotations of such theologians as the society offers them. To begin with, then, the SSPX provide a basic orientation of the

[137] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 101.
[138] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, part one, chap. 3.
[139] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 32–33.

theology of the Paschal mystery, quoting such theologians as they saw fit; it is is a re-thinking of the Redemption:

> What we call Paschal mystery, classic theology called the dogma of the Redemption. It is easy to see how Redemption and Paschal mystery coincide broadly speaking.[140]
>
> Redemption takes the form of a problem to be solved.…How can an infinite offense be atoned for? How can one person make up for all? How can somebody who is innocent pay for somebody who is guilty? … If God were truly Father, would He be so exacting in His accounts, and would He take out His anger on His beloved Son? In the theology of the Paschal mystery, one does not meet with such pitfalls. Our salvation now appears to be wrought by a vital, free, and purely voluntary initiative coming entirely from God's merciful love.[141]

The SSPX ever so succinctly observed that if one is to change the doctrine of Redemption from "satisfaction of justice" to "voluntary act of merciful love," it follows that another doctrinal change must occur; the doctrine that sin incurs a debt must in some way be altered.[142] In this matter, the SSPX felt up to the task of demonstrating that not only do many modern theologians no longer think that sin offends the justice of God in a manner that requires atonement,[143] but that this erroneous theological teaching was also taken up by the Church in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:[144]

> Moreover, sin does not offend the justice of God, but offends only His love insofar as it constitutes a refusal of this love. The same view emerges from the 1992 Catechism:
> 'Sin is an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; it is failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. Sin is an offense against God (Ps. 51:6). Sin sets itself against God's love for us and turns our hearts away from it' (CCC §§1849, 1850).[145]

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140 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 39.
141 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p 40.
142 Ibid.
143 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 41.
144 Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, USCCB Publishing, Revised edition (Washington, D.C.: USCCB Publishing, 1995), §1849–1850.
145 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p 41.

It is important to mark that a shift has occurred. The matter is now one of magisterial significance. The SSPX's claim is now that, the CCC, a magisterial text, teaches a false doctrine; namely, that the CCC teaches that "sin does not offend the justice of God, but offends only His love."[146]

Having, seemingly, established that the Church herself has adopted this error from the Theology of the Paschal Mystery, the SSPX reveal the disastrous effect that it has on the doctrine of Redemption. Before the council, the SSPX argued, the Popes had explained the role that love played in the Redemption, but always in terms of the satisfaction of divine justice:

> The mystery of the Divine Redemption is firstly and by its nature a mystery of love; the mystery of Christ's love of justice towards His heavenly Father, to whom the sacrifice of the Cross is offered in a spirit of loving obedience, gives the superabundant and infinite satisfaction which the sins of the human race made necessary; "By suffering out of love and obedience, Christ gave more to God than was required to compensate for the offense of the whole human race" (ST, III, Q. 48, A. 2).[147]

After the council, however, the SSPX noted that the Popes had dropped divine justice from the doctrine of the Redemption and emphasized God's love alone:

> that love which does not recoil before the extraordinary sacrifice of the Son, in order to satisfy the fidelity of the Creator and Father towards human beings.[148]

As it happened earlier, with regard to the CCC, the SSPX again claimed that the Church, through a magisterial act, had adopted an erroneous teaching from the Theology of the Paschal Mystery. Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, according to the SSPX, does not present the Church's perennial teaching on the Redemption, rather it presents the "perspective of the Theology Paschal Mystery."[149] According to the SSPX, the Pope in *Dives in Misericordia* confesses the lie that

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146 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 41.
147 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 43.
148 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 44.
149 Ibid.

the "Redemption is no longer the satisfaction of divine justice."[150] Consequently, "the word "satisfy" as it is used here [in *Dives in Misericordia*] loses its particular theological connotation,"[151] and it is clear that "the redemptive work of Christ is not meant to make satisfaction for the sins of man but only to reveal fully the love of the Father."[152]

It is thus, the SSPX posited, that at the behest of the Second Vatican Council,[153] the Theology of the Paschal Mystery, erroneous in its conception of the Redemption to the point of heresy, was applied to the liturgical reform and specifically to the Mass; thus, that its false doctrine is now taught by the magisterium of the Church, that is, in the CCC and in *Dives in Misericordia*. It was in virtue of this erroneous doctrine, the SSPX argued, that the Mass was stripped of the true doctrine, which the Church itself had rejected. With a number of prayers of contrition and intercession removed, the Mass simultaneously fails to convey the satisfaction of divine justice and succeeds in professing an erroneous theology: Redemption through love alone; the Mass fails to present "the lex credendi of the Church," and succeeds in propagating "a doctrine that smacks of heterodoxy."[154]

2. The Paschal Mystery: From "*ex Opere Operato*" to "Sacraments of Faith"

The procedure, though perhaps welcomed by some, of providing an account of the second and third accusations of the SSPX on the same scale as the first accusation, would be tedious indeed. While it was important to establish the style of each accusation, having done so, I will now exercise brevity, though clarity as well.

As I have demonstrated in the last section, it was through a series of quotations from theologians and the magisterium which establish a pattern of thought that finds expression in the Mass, that the SSPX "proved" the mutation of Catholic doctrine. Similarly, with the theology of the

[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.
[152] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 45.
[153] Vatican II, *Sacrosantum Concilium*, §21.
[154] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 101.

sacraments, the SSPX synthesized the thought of individual theologians with the teaching of the CCC; the SSPX provided individuals' theology and, by reason of comparison, concluded the Church's adoption of this theology.

Consulting various theological texts, the SSPX observed that some theologians of the Theology of the Paschal Mystery, or the new theology, had adopted a new understanding of what a sacrament accomplishes.[155] That is, one of the more prominent of these new theologians, Odo Casel, attempted to restore the full meaning of the word sacrament which he believed the ancient Church Fathers attributed to it, and which had gradually fallen out of use.[156] Insofar as the SSPX comprehended the teaching of Odo Casel, they understood him to have taught that a sacrament does not produce an effect, like the Church used to teach; instead it "make[s] something present in reality."[157] This development, according to the SSPX, was Odo Casel's response to a modern philosophy that employed specifically two terms, phenomenon and foundation, in order to describe how man can experience reality (that is, foundation) through experience (that is, phenomenon). The SSPX claimed that, in order to respond to this modern philosophy, the Church had abandoned the traditional definition of the sacraments and had adopted the modern philosophy's terminology and its conceptual premise, now teaching that man, in the sacraments (phenomenon), comes into contact with the actions of Christ (foundation) which are made "present in reality."[158]

> The 1992 Catechism is very much marked by this philosophical tendency. Near the beginning of the section on "the sacramental celebration of the Paschal mystery" eight paragraphs are devoted to the notion of "signs and symbols" (CCC §§1145-52) stating that, "man perceives spiritual realities through physical signs and symbols" (CCC §1146).[159]

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155 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p. 55.
156 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p. 54.
157 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p. 55.
158 Ibid.
159 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p. 59–60.

This change in Church doctrine, this adoption of modern philosophical thought, is dangerous to the faithful, the SSPX argued, because it considers the efficacy of the sacrament to be derived from man's perception of the spiritual reality hidden in the sacrament. Even if the traditional phrases of sacramental instrumentality are kept in the CCC, the SSPX argued, it has lost the traditional meaning, and now means manifesting Christ's eternal actions to the believer. The traditional teaching, on the other hand, was crucial because it taught that the sacrament is effectual by virtue of its very execution, regardless of a person's spiritual disposition. But, according to the SSPX, the CCC's teaching makes the effect of the sacrament depend on the disposition of the faithful:

> If by "the very fact of the action's being performed" one no longer understands the sacramental action which, each time, is accomplished and applied to the soul, but rather the very action of Christ accomplished once for all (CCC §1128) and present under the veil of the mystery, it seems necessary to affirm that the sacraments, in order to be efficacious ("*ex opere operato*") require that the symbols, making present the actions of Christ, be interpreted by the faith of the recipient in order to establish contact with the saving action of Christ… Insofar as it rests upon philosophies of the symbolic type, this notion of sacrament cannot be reconciled with the Church's doctrine on the sacraments.[160]

3. The Paschal Mystery: From Sacrifice to Memorial Meal

As in the last two sections, through a series of quotations from theologians and the magisterium, so in this section, on the sacrifice of the Mass, did the SSPX synthesize the thought of individual theologians with the teaching of the CCC and conclude that the Church had adopted an erroneous theology and applied it to the Mass. Accordingly, the SSPX first noted that the general structure of the Mass has changed in order to express its memorial dimension at the expense of the sacrificial dimension, the dimension which the traditional missal had emphasized.

[160] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p. 95–96, 98.

> We will now, therefore, analyze what the new theology understands by "memorial," and seek to clarify in particular the link it wishes to keep with the sacrificial dimension of the Mass.[161]

The concept of memorial is closely tied to the notion of sacrament, which we discussed in the last section, because, the new theology teaches, it makes Christ's act of Sacrifice on the Cross present:

> The doctrine of the Paschal mystery… considers the sacraments as means of making the actions of Christ present. This change of perspective renders somewhat obsolete the clearly sacrificial character which the Mass previously bore.[162]

The reason why SSPX think that the memorial perspective eliminates the sacrificial dimension is because the reformers, working from the memorial perspective, structured the ritual action in the manner of a commemorative event instead of a sacrificial act, a memorial meal instead of a true sacrifice. According to the SSPX, the Church considers the Mass to be a memorial meal, a communal action recalling Christ's actions, making present those same actions during the meal.[163] No longer, according to the SSPX, does the Church teach that the sacrifice of the Mass is visible in the consecration, rather it is concealed "under the veil of the mystery."[164] Furious that the Theology of the Paschal Mystery no longer considered the external rite to be a sacrificial action, "one cannot say that the bread separated from the wine is the sign of sacrifice,"[165] the SSPX argued that traditional Catholic theology has always explained the sacrificial nature of the Mass in terms of the visible sacrificial action, and the memorial dimension of the Mass in terms its sacrificial nature, which represents the Crucifixion.

> For *Mediator Dei*, the Mass is not a sacrifice by virtue of being a memorial which makes the sacrifice of Calvary present. The Mass is a sacrifice because at the end of the

[161] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p. 77.
[162] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p. 69.
[163] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p. 72.
[164] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p. 92.
[165] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p. 78.

> double consecration a true, ritual, unbloody sacrifice, itself a sign of the bloody immolation, is brought about[166]

In contrast with their understanding of *Mediator Dei*, the SSPX observed that the CCC teaches that, "because it is the memorial of Christ's Passover, the Eucharist is also a sacrifice."[167] The SSPX understand the CCC to mean that "the Mass is then firstly a memorial; it is only a sacrifice secondarily; … not because the Mass is a true, ritual sacrifice but because the memorial 'makes the sacrifice of the Cross present' beneath the veil of mystery."[168] Thus, the SSPX concluded that the Church no longer teaches that the Mass is a visible sacrifice, nor that it is a true and proper sacrifice, because, "strictly speaking, there can only be a true and proper sacrifice where there is a true victim and real immolation," and "the theology of the Paschal mystery leaves aside these explanations."[169]

Summary of the SSPX's Accusations From Chapter Three

Firstly, according to the SSPX, the Church no longer teaches that Jesus satisfied divine justice when He died on the cross for the salvation of men. Secondly, the Church no longer teaches that the sacraments are effectual *ex opere operato*. Thirdly, the Church no longer teaches that the sacrifice of the Mass is grounded in the immolation of the body and blood of Christ which occurs through transubstantiation.

The purpose and direction of *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform* was to "establish what attitude one should have towards this Novus Ordo Missae."[170] Finding that the Mass was structured to exclude certain traditional Catholic principles, and that by that very fact, it propagates a doctrine, the Theology of the Paschal Mystery, which also excludes those same principles from its theology, the SSPX came to three conclusions. Firstly, "recognizing the indissoluble link between the new missal and

[166] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p. 77.
[167] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §1365.
[168] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p. 79.
[169] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p. 92.
[170] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*. Forward.

the new theology of the Paschal mystery changes the nature of the judgment that needs to be made about the liturgical reform. Rather than being pastoral or even liturgical, it must be first and foremost doctrinal."[171] Secondly, "by juxtaposing the theology of the Paschal mystery with the teaching of the Council of Trent, we [the SSPX] are obliged to conclude that the theses of the theology of the Paschal mystery are either dangerous for the faith,… or else they openly contradict it."[172] It is because the SSPX believe that the Mass, an element of Church discipline, contradicts an infallible teaching of the Church, that they believe that they can reject the discipline, which would normally demand total acquiescence. The missal of Paul VI, said the SSPX, is no more than an unjust law for the very reason given.[173] Thus, finally, the SSPX concluded that "the only attitude of fidelity to the Church and to Catholic doctrine appropriate for our salvation is a categorical refusal to accept this reformation."[174]

[171] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p. 84.
[172] Ibid.
[173] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p 106.
[174] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 101.

Answering the SSPX

Rejection of one's holy duty of obedience to the Pope in the matter of liturgy, must be grounded in an impervious argument proving the evil of the commanded liturgical act. Otherwise, such disobedience has no possible justification. The SSPX believe their disobedience in this liturgical matter is justified because of the faulty doctrinal aspects that they perceive in the Mass which contradict infallible Church teaching. That the Church and the Mass truly do contain and manifest these errors must be established necessarily for the SSPX to maintain their position. For, if the Church called for the manifestation of the Theology of the Paschal Mystery in the liturgy,[175] it does not follow that the Church teaches what any theologian who worked on the liturgical reform might teach, nor does it follow that the structure of the rite, formed with evil intent, manifests teachings that contradict the Church's doctrine. The liturgy is the action proper to the Church and manifests the doctrine of the Church, not the doctrine of theologians. Besides liturgical words and actions, the Church makes known its mind through the proclamations of councils, through the encyclicals of Popes, and through the CCC, to name some legitimate sources; the teaching of the Church does not amount to the sum of all scrupulous theological writings.[176] Therefore, I will not follow up on all of the references, quotations, and various theologians cited by the SSPX because it is superfluous to test the cohesion of a grand collusion throughout a collage of quotations which can have no bearing on what is truly relevant, the magisterial texts and the Roman missal, except, perhaps, to note that they have no bearing. Thus, the following responses are refined to the point of rebutting the main accusations only, the accusations directed against the magisterium.

[175] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*. p. 35.
[176] CDF, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Concluding Formula of the Professio fidei*.

1. The Truth of Redemption is Still Proclaimed by the Church

The matter of true import is whether the SSPX sufficiently demonstrated that the Church teaches erroneous doctrine. Does the Church no longer teach that sin is an offense against God's justice? Does the Church no longer teach that the Crucifixion satisfied divine justice? The SSPX provided certain pieces of the magisterium which seemed to indicate so, but each magisterial text must be read as a whole, one cannot pick and choose some of the teachings in the text, and then conclude that the Church no longer teaches others. But exactly this is what the SSPX did with respect to the CCC and Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, as I will now demonstrate.

The SSPX argued above that the CCC no longer considers sin to be an offense against God's justice, but only His love. To prove this, they provided a condensed version of two paragraphs from the CCC on the definition of sin:

> Moreover, sin does not offend the justice of God, but offends only His love insofar as it constitutes a refusal of this love. The same view emerges from the 1992 Catechism: 'Sin is an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; it is failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. Sin is an offense against God (Ps. 51:6). Sin sets itself against God's love for us and turns our hearts away from it' (CCC §§1849, 1850).[177]

But this condensed version of paragraphs 1849 and 1850, excludes the crucial aspect of the definition of sin taught by the CCC in paragraph 1849:

> Sin is an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; it is failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. *It has been defined as "an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law* (my emphasis)."[178]

[177] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 43.
[178] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §1849.

What does it mean for sin to be "an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law"? In the first place, it seems to capture the entirety of the meaning of sin, for, as the CCC noted, it is the definition that St. Augustine gave to sin, and the definition which St. Thomas Aquinas also gave to sin, and the very topic of article six of question seventy-one in the *Prima Secundae* where Aquinas answers the objectors to the sufficiency of this definition by saying, "the authority of Augustine suffices."[179] But how does defining sin as something contrary to the eternal law contain the notion that sin is an injustice? Aquinas described the eternal law as "the very idea of the government of things in God the ruler of the universe": as proceeding from divine reason.[180] Now it is evident that "an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary" to the government of God is an injustice always. Therefore, the teaching that sin offends God's justice *is* expressed in the CCC, and one cannot claim, as the SSPX did, that the Church considers sin to be an offense *only* against God's love.

However, the SSPX also claimed that the post-conciliar Popes no longer consider the Crucifixion as the satisfaction of divine justice. They criticize Pope John Paul II for referring to the Crucifixion solely in terms of God's love for us, quoting the following selection from his encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*:

> the depth of that love which does not recoil before the extraordinary sacrifice of the Son, in order to satisfy the fidelity of the Creator and Father towards human beings.[181]

Whereas the pre-concilar Popes had considered the Crucifixion in terms of God's love, the SSPX observed, that those same popes taught that it also made satisfaction for the offense of man's sins against God's justice. The SSPX quote Pope Pius XII, setting his encyclical *Haurietis Aquas* in contrast with the teaching of PJP2:

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179 Aquinas, *ST,* I-II, qu. 71, art. 1.
180 Aquinas, *ST*, I-II, qu. 91, art. 6.
181 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 44.

> The mystery of the Divine Redemption is firstly and by its nature a mystery of love; the mystery of Christ's love of justice towards His heavenly Father, to whom the sacrifice of the Cross is offered in a spirit of loving obedience, gives the superabundant and infinite satisfaction which the sins of the human race made necessary.[182]

But once more, the SSPX have completely ignored a crucial section of a magisterial text. For, just two paragraphs below the selection of PJP2's *Dives in Misericordia* which they find so repelling, stands what is perhaps the most explicit affirmation of the satisfaction of Divine Justice by virtue of the Crucifixion that any post-conciliar pope has articulated in any magisterial document:

> In the passion and death of Christ - in the fact that the Father did not spare His own Son, but 'for our sake made him sin' - absolute justice is expressed, for Christ undergoes the passion and cross because of the sins of humanity. This constitutes even a 'superabundance' of justice, for the sins of man are 'compensated for' by the sacrifice of the Man-God.[183]

The notion that the faulty theology of wicked theologians, in regard to the satisfaction of divine justice and the injustice of sin, has been adopted by the Church, is, therefore, clearly a false notion and has no magisterial foundation. In fact, PJP2, in his encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*, teaches that the Theology of the Paschal Mystery, insofar as it is considered and adopted by the Church, does not in itself deny the theological principle of the satisfaction of divine justice, as the SSPX would have us believe:

> The Paschal Mystery is the culmination of this revealing and effecting of mercy, which is able to justify man, to restore justice in the sense of that salvific order which God willed from the beginning in man and, through man, in the world.[184]

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182 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p. 43.

183 John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*, §7, accessed November 12, 2023, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30111980_dives-in-misericordia.html.

184 John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*, §7.

But does the Mass itself express the true teaching at any point in its celebration? Certainly it does. For, if "the sacrifice of the Man-God" constitutes a "superabundance of justice," then the satisfaction of divine justice is expressed in every Mass when the priest, speaking in the person of Jesus, says "this is my body, given up for you." Perhaps Christ's sacrifice is referred to more frequently throughout the rite as an act of love rather than justice, but given that Pope Pius XII taught that "the mystery of the Divine Redemption is firstly and by its nature a mystery of love,"[185] a strong argument could be made that the aspect of God's love in Christ's sacrifice *ought* to have a greater emphasis in the Mass.

2. The Church Still Teaches That the Sacraments are Effectual "*ex Opere Operato*"

Insofar as the SSPX comprehended the teaching Odo Casel, they understood him to have taught that a sacrament does not produce an effect, like the Church used to teach; instead it "make[s] something present in reality."[186] However, this understanding fails to acknowledge the aim of Casel's theological work, and, consequently, the SSPX misinterpreted Casel's sacramental system.

Odo Casel based his understanding of the sacraments on the theology of Aquinas,[187] from whom the Church adopted the phrase "*ex opere operato*." Now it would be surprising indeed if Casel was satisfied with conclusions which he openly believed to contradict his premises, and, of course, he didn't believe that he had contradicted Aquinas. According to Aquinas, the sacraments "effect what they signify,"[188] and what they signify are three things: "the very cause of our sanctification, which is Christ's passion; the form of our sanctification, which is grace and the virtues; and the ultimate end of our sanctification, which is eternal life."[189] Odo Casel simply combined both of these teachings from

[185] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 43.
[186] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 55.
[187] *Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft*, 8. Band, 2., Durchgesehene Auflage, herausgegeben von Odo Casel OSB (Münster: Verlag Aschendorff, 1928), p. 177.
[188] Aquinas, *ST,* III, qu. 62 art. 1.
[189] Aquinas, *ST*, III, qu. 60, art. 3.

Aquinas to emphasize that Christ's salvific actions are in some manner present when the sacraments are performed. For, referring to the three aspects which Aquinas attributed to the signification of the sacraments, Odo Casel said: "according to his principle that sacraments accomplish what they signify, all three aspects must, therefore, also be effected."[190] In fact, far from denying that the sacraments work *ex opere operato*, Casel stressed that the sacraments do more *ex opere operato* than was commonly believed by most others in his lifetime. Emphasizing that the Passion itself is effected by the sacraments, and not just grace and virtues, Odo Casel argued:

> The effect is, therefore, only signified, insofar as the cause, i.e., the Passion (which is past), is signified. It would be rather peculiar if the cause were only represented figuratively (without content and reality), and yet the effect, which can only arise from that cause, were actually brought about. If the effect is truly present, the cause must also be present, … Thus, it is by no means accurate to treat the first and third aspects as purely figurative, while allowing the second aspect to be real. These are modern interpretations that distort Thomas's intent.[191]

Thus, Casel did not try to reduce the traditional sacramental teaching of the instrumentality of the sacraments by claiming that they contain what they signify,[192] rather he attributed to the signification and instrumentality of the sacraments the full meaning that Aquinas intended:

> Christ's passion is, so to say, applied to man through the sacraments according the Apostle (Rom 6:3): All we who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death.[193]

It is evident that the CCC does, to a certain degree, also teach that the sacraments contain what they signify,[194] but not in the manner that the SSPX believed; not in such a manner that "the symbols,

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190 JLW, 8. Band, p. 177.
191 JLW, 8. Band, p. 178.
192 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 54–55.
193 Aquinas, *ST*, qu. 61, art. 1.
194 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §1104.

making present the actions of Christ, [must] be interpreted by the faith of the recipient in order to establish contact with the saving action of Christ."[195] The CCC explicitly teaches that:

> the sacraments act *ex opere operato* (literally: "by the very fact of the action's being performed"), i.e., by virtue of the saving work of Christ, accomplished once for all. It follows that 'the sacrament is not wrought by the righteousness of either the celebrant or the recipient, but by the power of God.' From the moment that a sacrament is celebrated in accordance with the intention of the Church, the power of Christ and his Spirit acts in and through it, independently of the personal holiness of the minister.[196]

The teaching of the CCC, therefore, is that the sacraments produce an effect because Christ is present in them and working through them. The CCC *does not* teach that the faithful, by believing, make Christ present in the sacraments or cause the sacrament to function.

In regard to the SSPX's claim that a modern philosophy had crept into the CCC, the word "phenomenon" does not appear once in the Catechism, and the word "foundation", though appearing a number of times, is never employed in the manner of a physical object in reference to a spiritual reality. Further, the claim that "the 1992 Catechism is very much marked by this philosophical tendency" because "eight paragraphs are devoted to the notion of "signs and symbols" (CCC §§1145-52) stating that, 'man perceives spiritual realities through physical signs and symbols,'" is complete balderdash! The only modern philosophers to whom one could attribute the teaching that "man perceives spiritual realities through physical signs and symbols" would be Dr. Thomas of Aquino[197] and Dr. Augustine of Hippo,[198] who have not been modern philosophers for quite some time.

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195 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p. 96.
196 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §1128.
197 Aquinas, *ST*, qu. 61, art. 1.
198 Saint Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* (Upper Saddle River: Robertson, D. W., 1997).

3. "The Sacrifice of Christ and the Sacrifice of the Eucharist are one Single Sacrifice"

According to the Church, the sacrificial nature of the Mass springs from its unity with the sacrifice of the Cross, while its rite has a sacrificial character in order to properly express the sacrifice. The Church does not consider the Mass to be a commemorative meal that makes the actions of Christ present in an invisible manner alone, as the SSPX claimed. The CCC teaches, under the heading "movement of the celebration," that it is the consecration which makes present Christ's sacrifice, not the anemnisis which follows:

> In the institution narrative, the power of the words and the action of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, make sacramentally present under the species of bread and wine Christ's body and blood, his sacrifice offered on the cross once for all.
>
> In the anamnesis that follows, the Church calls to mind the Passion, resurrection, and glorious return of Christ Jesus; she presents to the Father the offering of his Son which reconciles us with him.[199]

Thus, the CCC distinguishes between two commemorative actions: the consecration, which is commemorative because Christ said "do this in memory of me"; the anemnisis, which is commemorative because, during it, we call to mind all aspects of man's salvation in Christ. When the CCC teaches that the "Eucharist is thus a sacrifice because it re-presents (makes present) the sacrifice of the cross, because it is its memorial and because it applies its fruit,"[200] it does not consider the commemorative liturgical action as distinct from the sacrificial liturgical action; in fact, it immediately quotes Trent:

> at the Last Supper "on the night when he was betrayed," [he wanted] to leave to his beloved spouse the Church a visible sacrifice (as the nature of man demands) by which the bloody sacrifice which he was to accomplish once for all on the cross would be re-presented.[201]

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[199] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §1353, §1354. See also §1357 and §1375.
[200] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §1366.
[201] Ibid.

Because the Church believes that "the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are one single sacrifice,"[202] it also teaches that the external rite of the Mass is sacrificial:

> The sacrificial character of the Eucharist is manifested in the very words of institution: 'This is my body which is given for you' and 'This cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in my blood.'[203]

Summary and Conclusion

It is evident that the SSPX believe that the Theology of the Paschal Mystery has corrupted traditional Catholicism, that there are dangers present in the very rites of the Church. However, the procedure that the SSPX undertook, from cover to cover of *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, lacked the theological foundation that they needed in order to "establish what attitude one should have towards this Novus Ordo Missae."[204] The SSPX certainly invoked many erroneous-sounding propositions from various theologians who were instrumental in the liturgical reform, but essentially failed to secure the connection between those erroneous propositions and the magisterium of the Church, which needs must have been done before they could have concluded that "the only attitude of fidelity to the Church and to Catholic doctrine appropriate for our salvation is a categorical refusal to accept this reformation."[205] The Church's worst enemies are always the ones nearest her bosom, seeking to destroy her from within.[206] The anomaly is not when one crosses paths with Judas, but when one crosses swords with Peter; the novelty is the claim that the Pope has liturgically prescribed evil for the faithful.

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202 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §1367.
203 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §1365. See also §1366 and §1367.
204 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*. Forward.
205 The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*. p. 101.
206 Napoleon once declared to Cardinal Ercole Consalvi, "Your Eminence, are you not aware that I have the power to destroy the Catholic Church?" To which the cardinal replied: "Your Majesty, we Catholic clergy have done our best to destroy the Church for the last eighteen hundred years. We have not succeeded, and neither will you."

Having demonstrated that the Church teaches no error through her magisterium, nor manifests any in the Mass, the double-edged critiques of the SSPX have been rendered so many personal preferences; the Church proclaims the justice of the redemption, the injustice of sin, and the sacrifice of the Mass in its liturgical celebration of the Mass, leaving nothing but the claim that the liturgy no longer expresses these doctrines as many times as the SSPX would prefer: "man is not capable, however, of instantly comprehending all the riches of the sacrificial action wrought by the words of consecration,"[207] therefore, "they must be able to find in the rites the authentic teachings of the Magisterium of the Church."[208] As if Jesus did not give to Peter the power of binding and loosing all things pertaining to the worship of God,[209] the power to discern whether one genuflection or twenty-five be sufficient to achieve this end. Perhaps Catholics have a right to find the infallible truths of the Sacrifice of the Mass in the rites of the Church, but they do not have the right to find them as they see fit. The supreme judge of fit worship is the Pope, not the people; speak of the French Revolution in the Church!

The SSPX further asserted their right to reject Pope Paul VI's missal because, in comparison with the 1962 missal, the faithful gain fewer spiritual benefits through participation in its ritual:

> For an ordinance promulgated by a legislator to be a true law, obligatory for the community concerned, it is necessary by the nature of things that it be in itself and in relation to its object, right and just, possible to observe and truly useful to the commonweal. These qualities constitute the intrinsic reason for the existence of laws. And yet, Paul VI's missal, by reason of its serious theological defects, contributes directly to the lessening of faith, of piety, and of religious practice, as experience shows daily. For this reason, it is neither right, nor just, nor helpful to the common good. Thus it does not have the character of a true law, and cannot be obligatory.[210]

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[207] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform,* p. 5.
[208] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*, p. 1.
[209] Vatican I, *First Dogmatic Constitution of the Church of Christ*, session 4, chap. 3.
[210] The Society of Saint Pius X, *The Problem of the Liturgical Reform*. p. 106.

I have already demonstrated that the SSPX cannot attribute this "lessening of faith" that they perceive to any doctrinal contradiction on the part of the Church nor any privation in the Mass; they can only attribute this "lessening of faith" to the removal of many unessential traits from the Mass; unessentials which, by the very meaning of word, do not private the Mass of anything proper to it, nor the faithful of anything due to them. For, as Michael Davies explained in his book *I am With you Always*, citing the theology of Aquinas, the goods that the faithful can expect from the Mass include the sacrificial fruits of the celebration, and participation in Holy Communion, neither of which can nor have been omitted from the Mass.[211] On the basis of the nourishment of the faithful alone, the SSPX have no justification to reject Paul VI's missal. Such a rejection would amount to rejecting the sacrament itself in favor of the dressings and ornaments. "As if the sacraments have been instituted for no other purpose than for 'the nourishing of faith alone.'"[212]

[211] Davies, Michael, *I Am With You Always*, Second and Revised Edition (Eden Praire: Neumann Press, 1997).
[212] The Society of Saint Pius X, The Problem of the Liturgical Reform. p. 96.

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